

THE EARLIEST DISCUSSION OF THE CATHOLIC
QUESTION IN NEW ENGLAND—SEGUENOT
AND BURNETT. 1727.¹

IF any reader, looking only at the great questions now absorbing the minds of men, think us too far behind the times in reviewing at this day a publication of the early part of the last century, we plead in defence that we Catholics had no REVIEW, or, in fact, any publication at all in this country at the time of the appearance of the work, and that even in our hands this curious and romantic affair cannot be very dull or dreary.

The little work is, in fact, connected with some of the most romantic incidents in New England history, with the preaching of Eliot, his praying towns, New England injustice to the Indians, King Philip's War, the death of Major Waldron.

Though the story of Christine Otis has been alluded to in many local histories, it has probably escaped the eye of Catholic readers in general, with the discussion we here rake up from the musty piles of New England controversies. The publication on which we found our notice is extremely rare, so rare that the late George Brinley, who had scoured all the old garrets and closets of New England to bring together his wonderful library, does not seem to have possessed a copy.

To a Catholic it has the additional interest of being the first statement of Catholic doctrine printed in New England, or, indeed, in any part of the thirteen Colonies, and as such could have led all our publications in the *Bibliotheca Catholica Americana*, of our late antiquarian friend, Rev. Joseph M. Finotti.

About the same period there were two other controversies, it is true; one between a Jesuit father and an Episcopal clergyman, in Maryland, and the other between the Jesuit Father Sebastian Rale, of Norridgewock, Maine, and the Rev. Mr. Baxter, who was sent from Massachusetts to endeavor to win his flock to Protestantism. These discussions were not, however, printed at the time, so that the letter of the good Sulpitian to the Christine whose amiable character from childhood seems to have endeared her to her Canadian friends, though it failed to recall her to the faith in which she had been nurtured, was translated and printed in Boston as

¹ Letter from a Romish priest in Canada to one who was taken captive in her infancy and instructed in the Romish faith, but some time ago, returned to this her native country; with an answer thereto. By a person to whom it was communicated. Boston: Printed for D. Henchman, at the corner shop over against the Brick Meeting-house, in Cornhill. MDCCXXIX.

the first publication to diffuse in that benighted land the true doctrines of Christianity.

Before the first English settlements in New England, the Pawtuckets, or Pennacook Indians, spread from the banks of the Merrimac to the Kennebec, and were ruled by a chief of superior ability, Passaconaway. When colonists came, sachem and people welcomed them, and lands were ceded for their use. Every year, however, the newcomers became more exorbitant in their demands, till, at last, the sachem, who had reached the years, not only of four score and ten, but even of five, and it is said of six score, sought humbly from the guests whom he had welcomed a scanty foothold for his band in the wide domain over which he had once held sway.

Amid the grasping and sordid people who were thus pushing away the Indians, to chafe, and fret, and plot, there arose a man who believed that as Christians they were morally bound to impart a knowledge of God and his divine Son to the benighted natives.

John Eliot, who so cordially met the Jesuit Father Druillettes, and invited him to winter in his home, began his labors as a missionary at Newton Corner, gaining many hearers and a few converts. Praying villages sprang up, not all made up of Indians who had embraced Christianity, but including those who showed an inclination to listen to the teachings of Eliot and his associates. Efforts were made, meanwhile, to induce the natives to adopt the agriculture and habits of the whites.

Eliot gradually extended the area of his labors, and in 1647 visited the village of Passaconaway, but the chief would not see him. He withdrew, disdaining, as it were, to hold converse with the man who was bent on transforming the gallant brave into the dull plodder, the open-handed Indian into a close and grasping white.

The next year he showed less repugnance. Eliot began his work,¹ and ere long there were praying towns in the land of the Pennacooks. The religious influence, however, produced by annual visits could not have been very profound, or the instruction extended.

Passaconaway himself said to Eliot: "You do as if one should come and throw a fine thing among us, and we should catch at it earnestly, because it appears so beautiful, but cannot look at it to

¹ Eliot's first sermon before Passaconaway was from Malachy i. 11, which he thus rendered: "From the rising of the sun to the going down of the same, thy name shall be great among the Indians; and in every place prayers shall be made to thy name, pure prayers, for thy name shall be great among the Indians." This suppression of the idea of sacrifice is curious, and, in view of one of Seguenot's chief points, not without interest.

see what is within; there may be in it something or nothing, a stock, a stone, or a precious treasure; but if it be opened, and we see what is valuable therein, then we think much of it. So you tell us of religion, and we like it very well at first sight, but we know not what is within; it may be excellent, or it may be nothing; we cannot tell; but if you will stay with us and open it to us, and show us all within, we shall believe it to be as good as you say it is."

We know how Eliot, with immense labor, translated the Bible into the Natick language, as though that were to achieve what only daily instruction and guidance could effect.

Something, however, was gained. The legislature appointed an Indian superintendent; idolatry and the superstitious rites of the medicine men were suppressed; laws made; the sale of liquor prohibited, though it could not be wholly prevented. It will strike us as queer, however, that tithes were to be levied on the Indians for the support of their teachers.

While the efforts of this zealous man to convert and save the Indian were extending, he did not receive general support. By many, in fact, his whole scheme was viewed with an evil eye. In their judgment the Indian should be crowded out and exterminated. Their policy, so often revived and followed, bore its fruit. Philip animated the scattered bands to begin a war of extermination, urging the Indians to root out the whites unless they, themselves, would be rooted out.

The hamlets and outlying farms of New England reddened the midnight sky with the blaze which disclosed the scalped and murdered inmates. Then every Indian became a matter of suspicion and dread; and the Praying Indians were marked out for destruction by the hot and lawless. Wannalancet, the successor of Passaconaway, faithful to the counsels of that chief, had refused to enter into Philip's projects, and to the last declined to give him any aid. But this could not save his tribe from the brutality of the colonial rabble. Yielding to the storm, the General Court confined the Praying Indians to narrow limits, and at last carried off hundreds from their villages to perish in the close confinement to which they were doomed.

The glowing pictures, by New England writers, of the rigid morality and piety of the settlers, are not sustained by facts. Impartial visitors found these colonies not superior to others which were less loud in their professions. Vice and debauchery among the lower class, unscrupulous rapacity among men in office, appear there as elsewhere; and the Indians suffered alike from both.

Wannalancet would not raise his hand against the whites, but he could not remain in safety. With his band he struck into the

wilderness and wintered on the headwaters of the Connecticut, far from all the haunts of men. His village was given to the flames and his lands laid waste. A band that had remained at Wamesit were accused of ravages committed by Philip's men. They were all seized and hurried to Boston, where, after long delay, they were declared innocent; yet while conducted back to their home by a guard, one of them was deliberately murdered. The outrage was followed by a still grosser one, when women and children were fired upon, one being slain and several dangerously injured.

The Wamesit Indians fled in alarm to join their brethren under Wannalancet, in the woods near Canada, but after great suffering were forced by hunger to return. As danger again menaced them, they fled once more, leaving some of the old and decrepit, who were soon burned alive in their wigwams.

These well-disposed Indians, thus hardly treated, patiently awaited in the wilderness the close of the war, hoping that the minds of the mob would be more disposed to credit their innocence. When Philip fell and peace was restored, the fugitives began to return. The post at Dover, where Major Richard Waldron commanded, with its stores of goods, became a centre. From the woodlands afar the braves came, with their squaws and children, to barter the furs they had gathered for articles they sadly needed. Among them came many of the Pennacooks. Ere long four hundred dusky forms were gathered around; all considered themselves as perfectly safe. But Waldron, instigated by greed and cunning, or acting under orders from Boston, resolved to seize a number of them. To do so openly might result in a disastrous failure, so he had recourse to stratagem. He proposed to the Indians that they should have a sham battle. The Indians entered into the spirit of the affair. While the fictitious strife was going on, two companies of Provincial soldiers surrounded the Indians, and before the latter could suspect treachery, disarmed them all, and prepared to send them to Boston. The General Court approved the dark act of treachery. The Indians were put on trial; a few escaped; five or six were actually hung, the rest were sold into slavery.

Wannalancet and a remnant of the tribe fled, never to return. They made their home in a mission village on the banks of the St. Lawrence, where devoted men preached and practiced a purer and nobler faith, and the neophytes of Eliot became the unexpected and uninvited catechumens of a Catholic mission.

Others lingered in fastnesses of the mountains brooding over their wrongs, and anxious by any agency to wreak vengeance on their oppressors.

Year by year the winter snows whitened the earth and it hardened under the fierce summer sun, till at last these Pennacooks

gloated with savage glee to see the long-desired vengeance ready at their hands.

When Leisler, in his mad folly, had sent the New York savages to give the Canadian towns to conflagration, pillage, and murder, and New England had, as unwisely, provoked hostility on her frontiers, the Indians, whose unwritten annals kept vividly before their eyes the treachery of Coheco, resolved to repay it.

Their design was known in Boston, and a letter of warning was sent to Waldron. It was too late. That very day two squaws sought a night's lodging in every one of the garrison houses of Dover. They were admitted without distrust, and the inmates showed them how to open the doors early in the morning.

When sleep had settled on the town the women silently unbarred the doors to admit the vengeful braves. At Waldron's house they rushed at once to his room. The old man, if he had entrapped Indians and flogged Quakerwomen, was no coward. In spite of his eighty years he seized his sword and drove his assailants before him till they closed around and overpowered him. They set him upon a chair on a table, and each cut him across the breast as their victim used to mark their accounts in his books, crying, "I cross out my account," and when he tottered forward from loss of blood it was to fall upon his own sword.

His house was given to the flames. That of Richard Otis was taken in the same way, and he was killed as he rose from his bed. Two of his children fell beside him. His wife and four daughters were hurried away, three to be rescued, but the widow and her child Christine, with two Otis boys, the sons of Stephen, marched their weary way through the wilderness, enduring all the horrors of Indian captivity. New England Indians as they were, their captors did not halt till they reached villages of Indians under French control. The condition of these hapless persons, suffering for the wrong done by others, appealed to the Christian hearts of the French. Mrs. Otis and her child were purchased from their Indian captors and found a home at Montreal. No immediate prospect appeared, in those days of war, that they could soon return to the fire-marked site of their once happy home. The New England widow soon came to look on Canada as her future home. She embraced the Catholic faith, and married Philip Robitaille, in 1693, bringing up Christine and her other children in the religion which she had embraced.

Christine grew to womanhood, and married a Canadian named Le Beau, their marriage being blessed by the birth of a daughter; but her wedded life was not a long one, and we next find her a widow.

After vicissitudes of peace and war hostilities ceased, and com-

missioners were sent from the English colonies to superintend the return of all prisoners in Canada. Captain John Stoddard and the Rev. John Williams, a New England clergyman famous for his own Indian captivity, were those deputed, and with them went Captain Thomas Baker, of Northampton, Massachusetts, who had likewise had his share of Indian perils, bondage, and war. The meeting of Baker and Madame Christine le Beau seems to have inspired a strong affection. Baker, through the commissioners, used every effort to obtain her restoration, and she showed the greatest desire to return to New England. Her mother and daughter clung to Canada; the French clergy and the authorities sought to dissuade her, and raised various pretexts to delay or prevent her return. But she gave up mother and child, all her share in her husband's estate, and the means offered her, to accompany to New England the object of her choice, whom she married soon after. Isolated from all Catholic influence, Christine le Beau, become Mrs. Margaret Baker, lost her faith, and openly renouncing it joined the church of Mr. Solomon Stoddard at Northampton.

She was not forgotten on the banks of the St. Lawrence, and some years after the Rev. Francis Seguenot, a French priest from the diocese of Autun, a member of the Community of St. Sulpice, who had been zealously ministering for years to the people at Pointe-aux-Trembles and a wide district around it, resolved to make an effort to regain the lost sheep. The original letter which he addressed to Christine Otis is not extant, but a translation of it under the title of "A Letter from a Romish Priest in Canada" was printed at Boston in 1729. The letter seems to be pretty faithfully rendered, as the reader will judge:

J. M. J.¹

MY DEAR CHRISTINA, AND WHOM I MAY CALL MY SPIRITUAL DAUGHTER, Since I esteemed and directed you as such whilst you were here, and had the happiness of making one of the holy family of Jesus, Maria, Joseph, Joachim, and Anne, whereof I had the honor to be the director, and that you as well as Madame Robitail, your mother, whose confessor I am become since the death of Mr. Remi, who was well known to you, were of the number of about two hundred women of the best fashion of Ville Maria (that is, Mount-real), who then made up the mystical body of that holy association: I own also that all our members of the seminary, as well as all Mount-real, were edified with your carriage, you being sober and living as a true Christian and good Catholic, having no remains of the unhappy leaven of the irreligion and errors of the English, out of which Mr. Meriel had brought you, as well as your mother, taking you out of the deep darkness of heresy to bring you into the light of the true Church, the only spouse of Jesus Christ, out of which there is no salvation. I say the only spouse of Jesus Christ. It was allowed under the law of nature, and under that of Moses, to have many wives, for reasons which your ministers must know; but under the law of grace in which we live, established by Jesus Christ, the holy and true legislator, that multiplicity of wives is

¹ "These three letters are put in honor of Jesus, Maria, Joseph." Note in pamphlet.

forbidden, and for that reason Jesus Christ himself chose to have but one single spouse, which is His Church, which he purchased by the price of His adorable blood, which He loves and will love to all eternity, and against which the gates of hell and all the powers of this corrupted age shall not prevail, as He assures us,—St. Matthew, chapter xvi.,—when he saith to St. Peter: “Thou art Peter, and on this rock will I establish my Church,” which all the infernal powers shall never overset. Which is verified by the experience of all the heresies which almost in all ages have assaulted her, since she has dissipated them all, thrown from her bosom and crushed all those vipers, and has all along subsisted whole and without spot, and true to her spouse Jesus Christ, and will continue in that unalterable fidelity. And since Jesus Christ has promised on His side to be with her to the end of the world. Matt. xxviii. 20. There is (saith St. Paul, Eph. ch. iv. 4 and 5) but one God, one Jesus Christ, one faith, one baptism, one single body, which is the Church, one single spirit which animates and directs her. The English, the Dutch, the Calvinists, the Lutherans, the Zuinglians, dare not take those qualities to themselves, since they are many bodies and many spirits, different as to the doctrines of faith, differing the one from the other. The Puritans in England make up one, the Non-Conformists another; the Presbyterians one, the Episcopalians another; the Quakers one, the Anabaptists another; the Poor¹ one, the Lutherans in Germany, another; and do not the Calvinists in the Marquisat of Brandenburg make up a separate body from the rigid or moderate Lutherans? Lastly, do not the Zuinglians in Switzerland and the Genevese, their neighbors, make up bodies different from many others? And these different sects far from being animated by the same spirit, do they not contend with one another? and, to say the truth in one word, there is not one of all these sects that can boast of any religion.

And for proof of this, what is religion? It is a virtue by which we worship God as the sovereign and absolute Lord of all His creatures, whether by sacrifice and real offering with blood, as did of old the priests Aaron and his successors under the Mosaic law, in killing bullocks, rams, and lambs, or mystically, though very really, as do the priests under the law of grace, in sacrificing and offering every day to the most adorable Trinity, Jesus Christ, upon our altars. This sacrifice, besides, was instituted by Jesus Christ himself, the great and high Priest of the new law, to thank God for His mercies, to ask for new blessings, and to obtain of His goodness the pardon of our sins, so that the sacrifice of the law of grace, instituted and commanded by Jesus Christ, performs itself alone all that the sacrifices of the Mosaic law did together, and in a more effectual, more real, and truer manner, since those of the Old Law did not bestow grace, being, as St. Paul saith, but weak and poor elements (Gal. iv. 9), whereas, those of the New Law have it in themselves, and truly give it (Gal. iv. 5), since they contain the merits of the death and passion of Jesus Christ and of His adorable blood, and give us a real entrance into the adoption of the children of God. Eggeus, President of Achaia for the Romans, willing to oblige the Apostle St. Andrew to offer sacrifice to his false gods, he made this answer, which ought to confound all those who are out of the Catholic Church, and especially the ministers: “I offer every day,” said that holy apostle, “to the Almighty God, not the flesh of bulls, nor the blood of goats, but Jesus Christ, the Lamb without spot, whose flesh remains whole after the faithful have been fed and sanctified by the real eating of that divine Victim, which is the Bread of angels and children of God.” From this argument I conclude, and you ought to conclude with me, dear Christina, that the real sacrifice of some victim is essential to religion; and this is so true that the first idolaters and Pagans seeing that the Jews offered fleshly offerings to the true and holy God, according to the commandment given by the Lord to Moses on Mount Sinai, since this blind people, following the example of the Israelites, did build temples where they offered living creatures to their false gods, and it is what the Chinese and Japanese do to this day, who offer to them reasonable creatures, as do also the Africans in some places of that third part of the Old World, and in America, whence I conclude there is no religion either in Old or New England, nor in Holland, nor in part of Germany, nor at Geneva, nor in the Swiss Cantons that follow Zuinglius, because in all those

¹ By which is meant Vaudois, who were called the Poor of Lyons.

places there is neither sacrifice nor sacrificer, though they know, as we do, the true God, and because by a most deplorable blindness they have banished from amongst them the priesthood of Jesus Christ.

Reflect seriously, my dear Christina, on those fundamental truths, and know that the Catholic Church is the only mystical ark of Noah, in which salvation is found. All those who are gone out of it, and will not return into it, will unhappily perish, not in the deluge of waters, but in the eternal flames of the last judgment. Let me, my dear Christina, say to you what St. Paul said to the Galatians: Who has so far bewitched and blinded you as to make you leave the light and the truth to carry you amongst the English, where there is nothing but darkness and irreligion, schisms, divisions, and confusions, and consequently where the Catholic Church is not? She who is the only spouse of Jesus Christ, a Church of peace and unity. In a word, all those pretended churches spread over England, Holland, Switzerland, and part of Germany, are a very Tower of Babel, where they neither understand nor agree with one another; without head, without charity, without faith, without sacrifice, and consequently without religion. A Tower of Babel which destroys itself, and which shall be thrown down into the abyss at the terrible day of the last coming of Jesus Christ, the supreme Judge of the living and the dead.

Consider within yourself, my dear Christina, poor stray sheep, and, following the example of the Prodigal Son, come back to your Heavenly Father. Humble yourself before Him as Ahab did; own yourself guilty, as certainly you are, to have apostatized and forsaken the Lord, the only Spring of the healing waters of grace, to run after private cisterns, which cannot give them to you, since they have them not, having only the muddy waters of the Nile of unbelieving Egypt, and those of the Euphrates of infamous Babylon. Look once more within yourself, my dear Christina, as the Prodigal Son in the Gospel; hearken to the stings of your conscience, for it is impossible but you must feel them reproaching your apostasy. Read with attention the two letters I send you concerning the happy and Christian death of your daughter; above all, weigh with care the particular circumstances by which she owes herself infinitely indebted to the mercy of God, and the watchfulness of her grandmother, for having withstood her voyage to New England, and not suffered her to follow you thither. Consider with what religion and inward peace she received all the sacraments, and with what tranquillity she died in the bosom of the Church. I had been her confessor and director for many years before her marriage, and before her going down to Quebec, where she lived with her husband peaceably, and to the edification of all the town. Oh, happy death! My dear Christina, would you, like her, die as predestined, come in all haste and abjure your apostasy, and live as a true Christian and Catholic; else fear, and be persuaded that your death will be unhappy, attended with madness and despair, as that of Calvin was, whose errors are followed in New England, and who bewailed at his death, and, acting like an agitated fury, detested the fatal moment in which he had separated himself from the Roman Catholic Church, and those false and calumnious writings he had published against her. Luther, his predecessor, did not make a much happier end, he dying suddenly at the end of a plentiful supper, which lasted till ten or eleven at night, at which supper were present his three children and Catharine de Bore, his wife, who had been a nun, had made her three vows of poverty, chastity, and obedience; a woman of condition, and whom he had taken out of a monastery to make his wife, and had the impudence publicly to marry after the death of the Duke and Elector of Saxony, his protector, for he would not have dared to accomplish that sacrilegious marriage whilst that prince was living, who, though a Lutheran, abhorred marriages contracted between persons who before God and the Church had made vows of chastity, which Luther had done in his convent and Catharine de Bore in hers. But after the death of that Elector, Luther pulled off the mask, and publicly married her for all that he was a priest and a monk and Catharine de Bore a nun.

Henry the Eighth, King of England, was the first that made a schism with the Roman Church, not being willing to own her for his mother, as he and all his predecessors had done very religiously before. He left the Roman Church that he might put away his lawful wife, Catharine of Arragon, a princess of eminent virtue, and aunt to

the Emperor Charles the Fifth, and marry Anne Boleyn, whom some English historians believe to have been his daughter, begot by him on the Lady Boleyn, in the absence of Sir Thomas Boleyn, whom he had sent to France as ambassador to Francis the First. The same Henry the Eighth, four years after this scandalous marriage, caused the same Anne Boleyn to be beheaded, having discovered her unfaithfulness and her intrigues with some gallants which she had. The schismatical prince, feeling himself near his end, was desirous of confessing himself; and, notwithstanding he was a schismatic, he had not renounced those two sacraments of the Catholic Church, instituted, like the other five, by Jesus Christ. The bishops and priests who were then in London hid themselves, and would not receive his confession, as much in regard to the great scandal he, by his schism, had given to the Church as on account of the unheard of cruelty which he had committed against the monks, and some people distinguished by their characters, as Thomas More, Chancellor of England, and John Fisher, a bishop, who had refused to subscribe to his pretended and impious primacy of the English Church; and for having besides plundered and rifled all the goods, even to the holy vessels, out of the churches of the chief and richest abbeys of his kingdom. One of these bishops, however, confessed him, laying him under an obligation to build a hospital, thereby in some measure to redress the excessive wrongs he had done to the churches, which hospital, to speak justly, was nothing however in comparison with the rapines and extortions he had committed. He received the Communion also, and as the Consecrated Host was offered to him he would come out of his bed and fall down before it, a token that this unfortunate prince had kept the faith towards that divine sacrament, and towards the other six, on which he had writ a treatise against Luther, who had writ to him a wheedling letter to bring him into his party, which the King would not hearken to, but treated Luther as an heresiarch. And we read in history that one of King Henry the Eighth's predecessors, on his being to give battle to one of our kings of France, ordered, on the morning of the day of battle, all the soldiers should, as well as himself, partake of the adorable Body of Jesus Christ, at the Masses which the chaplains of the army were to officiate in, every one in his own quarters. Why, then, do the English at this time no longer acknowledge the truth and reality of the presence of Jesus Christ in that awful sacrament? The same history tells us that the English of former times built magnificent churches in some of our provinces, which then were in their possession, and in which churches Mass was said, and Jesus Christ offered to His Eternal Father. Why, then, do the English at this time not make profession of the same religion with their ancestors, who were thoroughly Roman Catholics? Was not Zuinglius, the chief of the Sacramentarians, killed at the head of the army he led against the Catholic Switzers, whom he would by force oblige to embrace his sect and his errors? Have even the apostles, or any other laborers in the Gospel, whereof Protestant ministers pretend (but without reason) to be the successors, been seen to march at the head of armies, with swords in their hands and cannon pointed to enforce the Gospel? I leave it to your ministers to judge of so extraordinary a proceeding.

But let us return to you (poor stray sheep): Think seriously on death, which may be nearer to you than you think of. What will you in that moment say for yourself to Jesus Christ to justify your apostasy, when He shall come to judge and decide of your fate to all eternity? Rather, in what sorrow and despair will you not be when you find that you have nothing solid to allege to Him to excuse your cowardly desertion? Perhaps, like the unfortunate Antiochus, you will own that you were in the wrong in forsaking Him and His Catholic Church, His only spouse, promising that if He grants you health again, you will repair the scandal that you have given by your apostasy. But do you know, my dear Christina, what will happen to you? the same (poor lamb) that happened to that unfortunate prince to whom the Lord showed no mercy, and whom He left to His justice, because he had first forsaken Him; and that when in health and able to convert himself he had slighted the Lord, and trod under foot the warnings which godly people had given him from God. Do not, then, dear Christina, saith the Lord by His prophets, defer any longer, and do not delay your repentance till the hour of death, but work it out now, as saith St. Paul, whilst you have time.

Harden not your heart, as saith the kingly prophet, but hearken to the Lord who speaks to you by our means. Your soul, my dear Christina, like that of the Prodigal Son, dies with hunger in the strange land whither you are gone. I call strange land that which is out of the Catholic Church, our true mother, who abundantly fed you with her milk and with her honey. You have where you are nobody that can absolve you of your sins, and give you that grace again which they have made you lose. You hear no longer the wholesome and true Word of God, having in that strange land no preachers who have received their mission from Jesus Christ or His apostles, nor bishops their successors, to declare to you that Divine Word, and to instruct you in the fundamental points of faith and principles of the Gospel, and in the practice of virtues, such as humility, Christian charity, contempt of the world and all its vanities, chastity, prayer, fasting, repentance, mortification, sufferings, love of the cross, longings after eternal blessings, and other principles taught in the Catholic Church, a language unknown to the Protestants, and to your fine reformers, let us say rather the true destroyers of all these holy practices. Who has sent these worthy reformers? Is it Jesus Christ? Has He spoken to Luther, to Calvin, to Zuinglius, or to the other schismatics who have withdrawn themselves from the Catholic Church to set up for themselves, as He spake to St. Peter: "Thou art Peter, and on this rock I will build my Church?" Did He say to them as He said to the same St. Peter and to the Apostles: "Go preach my Gospel to all the world; whatsoever sins you remit on the earth will be remitted and pardoned in heaven, and whatsoever sins you shall bind shall be bound in heaven?" Your ministers dare not say that Jesus Christ has sent them, or Luther, or Calvin, or Zuinglius, in such a manner; they never durst say it. Now none (saith St. Paul, Rom. x.) ought to intrude into the Gospel ministry without an authentic mission. Let us add, dear Christina, that the strange land in which you are doth not afford you the Pascal Lamb, the true heavenly Manna, the Bread of angels; I mean Jesus Christ contained really within the holy Eucharist, which is only to be found in the Catholic Church; so that you are in that place like the Prodigal Son, reduced to feed on improper and insipid food, which cannot give you life, after having fed here on the most exquisite, most savory, and most delicious food of heaven. I mean the adorable Body and precious Blood of Jesus Christ at the holy sacrament of the altar, as saith the Prophet Jeremy in his Lamentations, iv. 5.

Once more, dear Christina, return to this land, where you have received your baptism, and which I may say has given you life, since it is there you have been regenerated with water and the Holy Ghost, and have received the grace of adoption, and eaten the Bread of angels and children of God. Prevail with your husband to resolve on the same undertaking; the Holy Church, our good mother, will, on your abjuring your errors, receive you with open arms, as well as Mr. Robitail and his wife, your mother; you shall not want bread here, and if your husband will have land we shall find him some on the island of Montreal; but if he doth not desire any, and has a trade, he shall not want for work; but what is most essential is that you shall be here both of you enabled to work out your salvation, which you cannot do where you are, since there you are not in the mystical ark of the true Noah, which is the Catholic Church, the sole spouse of Jesus Christ, in which your daughter was bred, and in which she died.

Read, dear Christina, again and again that letter with the attention it deserves, since your eternal happiness or misery is at stake; show it to your ministers if you think it proper, or to whom else you please; and if they will answer me, let them do it in Latin or Greek, if they cannot conveniently write in French. I shall reply in Latin or Greek, for I cannot speak the English nor the Dutch tongue; and I hope, with the grace of God and the assistance of the Holy Ghost, who is the Spirit of truth, I shall evidently show them that they are in error, and that they entertain therein the people that hear them. Tell them from me to refute, if they can, the principles which I have set forth in this letter concerning the unity of one only true Church, founded by St. Peter and the other apostles, and transmitted by the bishops, their successors, to whom Jesus Christ has committed the keeping of the faith, and the direction of that same only spouse of Jesus Christ till now, and will continue so to do without any interrup-

tion, as the Scripture testifies in St. Matthew, and in the Acts of the Apostles, to the end of the world. Desire them from me to keep to that point, and to answer me with solidity, which they cannot do, to the principles I have laid down in this letter, for it would be endless to go over every article wherein we differ from one another, which, as it draws to no conclusion, serves only to maintain the dispute, and it is what those who find themselves in an error choose to do. In a word, let them give me an answer to what is essential and solid, and to the principles I lay down, of the unity of one true Church, the only spouse of Jesus Christ. And let them show me that the same Jesus Christ sent Luther, or Calvin, or Zuinglius to establish that same only Church, as He sent St. Peter and the other apostles to preach His Gospel, and to found that one Church. 'Tis what they can never do, who have framed many churches, all differing the one from the other; and it is what evidently proves that they err, and that those that follow them are maintained in an error; all their pretended churches being no other than a Tower of Babel, which, by its confusion and multiplicity, destroys itself.

Yield, dear Christina, to these truths, which are clearer than the sun at noonday, and return to the Catholic Church, the sole Church and spouse of Jesus Christ, her only Husband.

Before I make an end of this letter I must tell you that we have received here at Ville-Marie the abjuration of Mr. Henry Lidius, son to the deceased Mr. Lidius, or Dellius, late minister at Albany, and he is married to a very virtuous French young woman of Canada. I received his abjuration, and officiated at his marriage; the one and the other were performed to the edification of all Ville-Marie. I expect your answer to my letter, and am, dear Christina, entirely yours in Jesus and Maria.

SEGUENOT,

Priest of the Seminary at Ville-Marie.

You know me very well.

AT VILLE-MARIE (that is, Mount-real), the 5th of June, 1727.

The letter of the Sulpitian was not thrown aside. Mrs. Baker seems to have read it, and not without effect. Those around her could not understand it, but seemed to have noted an influence which they desired to counteract. The letter is said to have been written "in a very crabbed and hardly legible hand." It was at last placed in the hands of a gentleman who knew enough of French to transcribe it; but this, it seems, consumed "a pretty while."

The copy was submitted to William Burnett, a son of the famous Bishop Gilbert Burnett, who after having been for some years governor of New York and New Jersey, arrived in Boston in July, 1728, to hold the same twofold office over Massachusetts and New Hampshire. He was a dabbler in religious matters, and had recently published an essay on Scripture prophecies. As none of the New England clergy had entered the field to answer the Abbé Seguenot's letter either in Latin or Greek, Governor Burnett wrote a letter, in French to Mrs. Baker to refute that of the Canadian priest. The bookseller's preface says that this answer gave its author "but little trouble," "and besides had been done pretty hastily."

The two main points of Mr. Seguenot's letter, the unity of the Church and the necessity of sacrifice, he does not meet at any length. To the first he makes the point that if the Greek Church

is a true Church the Roman Church cannot be, since there can be only one such. A very weak argument, as the separation of the Greeks from the unity is a fact of history, and their schism could not make the Church less true than it was. He declares that it is "very ill-grounded" to insist on Protestants proving the divine mission of Luther and the other Reformers, without proving the divine mission of the Pope. He then lays down that the true Church contains all the faithful, of all ages, all over the world; that the unity is not visible, and that the Church has no need of a visible head; that the Church has been a great persecutor; that there were disputes between the religious orders, and therefore no unity.

In regard to sacrifice he insists that there was none at the Last Supper, there being but one sacrifice, that of the Cross. Yet if our Lord, as High Priest, offered on the cross the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world, He was none the less a high priest forever according to the order of Melchisedec, offering bread and wine, the twofold sacrifice accomplished on the evening and morning that made the last day of the week of weeks that preluded the Sabbath of man's redemption.

As points of history he denies the repentance of Calvin, Luther's taking Catharine de Bore from a convent, and the story about Anne Boleyn. He then adduces scandalous lives of Popes, justifies Zuinglius, and warns her not to trust herself again in the hands of Catholics.

From first to last there is not a single argument to prove the truth of any form of Protestantism, in its creed, worship, or ministry. It was not, indeed, very easy for the son of a bishop of the Church of England, who had just been the bulwark of Episcopacy in New York, to prove satisfactorily at Boston that Congregationalism, a revolt from the Church of England, persecuting alike Episcopalians on one side and Quakers and Baptists on the other, was the true Church of Christ. He had to set up a broad Church of his own, resting on no authority but his own.

His answer, as well as the Abbé Seguenot's letter, was translated, and they are printed together in the pamphlet issued at Boston in 1729, but Governor Burnett's name does not appear, and he is alluded to in the note of "The Bookseller to the Reader" simply as "a Person of distinction among us." New England writers assert his authorship, but biographical and bibliographical works, in speaking of the governor, do not include it among his literary performances.

Whatever effect it may have had on Mrs. Baker, it did not induce her and her husband to remove to Canada. They seem to have had many misfortunes and hardships, and leaving Northampton, in

Massachusetts, they made their way to her old home at Dover. But trouble followed them, and in 1736 she applied for a grant of land from the colony. It seems to have been ineffectual, and Mr. Baker seems to have been inclined to yield to some desire on the part of his wife to rejoin her mother in Canada. The Abbé Seguenot was, indeed, dead; his requiem was offered the very year in which he addressed his touching letter to her; but her mother and her kindred there would insure her a welcome. That Christine entertained this project may be inferred from the statement in Savage's *Genealogical Dictionary*, that the town of Dover ultimately gave her land on condition that she should not return to Canada.

She lived to an advanced age, and died February 23d, 1773. The name of Otis has remained in Canada. One of the sons of Stephen Otis, taken with Christine and her mother, was baptized there by the name of Francis John, and settling at Baie St. Paul, became, by his energy, a prominent man. One of his descendants, Messire Lucien Otis, after having had charge of several parishes, became Director of the Normal School at Quebec, and died in 1868, highly respected and esteemed for his ability and worth.

Christine is represented here by many descendants, among them the Hon. John Wentworth, of Illinois; and some of them may have received grace to embrace the truth which their ancestress lost.

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